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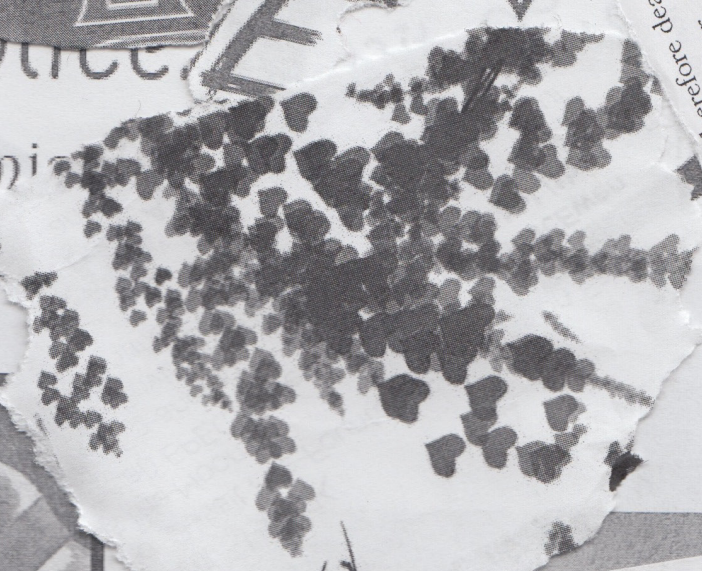
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HEALTH SERVICES

TO SUBMIT
COLLECTED
ARTICLES



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VOLUME 4

Tuesday
oh
god...

BBB
BBB
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Egg Hunt

issue

3

In This Issue...

Speak

The Bunnies! The Bunnies! - Cassie Farrow
Hipster Music opinions - Rowan Lupton
Feminism in China = Nil - Siqi Lu
Post-Excalibur Life Advice - Rachel Skorupka
Xavier's Rumor Spreading Column - Xavier Torres de Janon
Update from California McDonald's - M. Holbrook

Lies

Math Diary - Meaghan McGarry
pub 4096R/0xABCF73CD - Adam Leibson
Robo-Conlang - JULIA JACOBS <3
Familiar City - Claire Jones (sorry, we're required to include your full name or else it breaches the rule against anonymity :()

Sweet Poems - Tim Shay

Sci-fi Story - Jonathan Brannigan

ACTUAL OMEN PONY FANFIC WHAT - Alex De Strulle (why)

Hate

That Fucking Dress Again - Rowan Lupton
The one good thing from being tricked into going to some vague hippie sustainability talk - Jess Ide
French Comics Rant - Fiona Stewart Taylor <3
Articles about Chinese New Year - Siqi Lu

Staff Box:

B Corfman - Forest Bee
Grace Willey - Magic Moonbeams that reflected your tears
Jess Ide - Autumn Sass
Tom Howe - tom
Jonathan Gardner - Skullcrusher Deathblood
Alex de Strulle - Brony Friendzoni
Rowan Lupton - Tentacles the Octopony
Adam Leibson - eight bells
Julia Jacobs - OMG she's back we love her
Isaiah Mann - Mysterious Sunshine
Siqi Lu - Starlight Moonshine
Shivani Kapadia - Lilac Karlyle
Kaz Armstrong - Cammomile Earl
Emmanuel - CyberPony
Chris ??? - Bro Knee

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to omen@hampshire.edu, or Grace or B's mailboxes (735 and 1666)

Policy

The Omen is a biweekly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish.

Your submission must include the name you use around campus: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Thursday nights in the basement of Merrill in the company of a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on other Thursdays in Saga, the post office, or on the door of your mod.

THE OFFICIAL OMEN HAIKU:

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)

Cover by B Corfman
Secret message by Adam Leibson
Back cover by Ben Kiem

EDITORIAL

B Corman | Grace Willey

Dear Readers,

Welcome to another issue of the Omen.

People will often wander in to our office (in the Merrill A basement, alternating Thursdays at 8:00 - next meeting is the 12th of March).

When they do, they either have no idea where they are or what they're doing, or they seem to think there's some complicated or difficult process to getting involved.

This is frankly rather baffling to me. Hampshire - the Omen is YOUR Omen. The Omen loves you, and thrives on your submissions and care.

Do you know how everyone, ever, has gotten involved in the Omen? They basically got dragged along, stayed and talked to us, and ended up coming enough times to start caring about whether or not this beautiful paper disaster would shamble on gloriously for another year.

So if you want to get involved - come visit us! It's never too late in the semester or your time at Hampshire. If you want to do layout, well, you can kind of just ask. We'll let you do it. I promise.

Maybe now people will stop asking about applying to lay out the Omen? The only application process is your commitment and love. The torn remains of the Climax would probably help too.

On a completely unrelated note, I've acquired multiple new plants since last time

B Corman
Co-Editrix

Dearest Omenites,

Good evening.

I have nothing more to tell you than to do that thing that you should be doing instead of putting it off.

I don't mean that assignment, that research paper, that peice of procrastinated bullcrap you're going to turn in on Moodle five minutes before it's due. I mean that thing your soul needs to be doing- that novel, that art peice, that game, that poem, that song, that pulsing life force in your veins. Go do it. The assignments you don't care about can wait. Bullcrap those. Don't bullcrap on your soul.

Go do it.

Now.

Grace Willey
Co-Editor

SECTION SPEAK

The Bunnies! The Bunnies!
Submitted by Cassie Farrow

I feel I should preface this by stating that I am not afraid of bunnies.

Their presence in a room does not frighten me. Their hoppy legs and twitchy little noses do not frighten me. I am not intimidated by the sight of one lurking innocuously in a hotel foyer, or peering at me with its beady little eyes from behind whatever cover it's managed to appropriate.

I am, however, concerned about exactly what they're up to. The evidence is there, and even the most trusting and sceptical of us should be starting to see signs of it by now; the constant haughty form they all wear, the dismissive glares, the constant vandalism of electrical wires and, of course, the breeding.

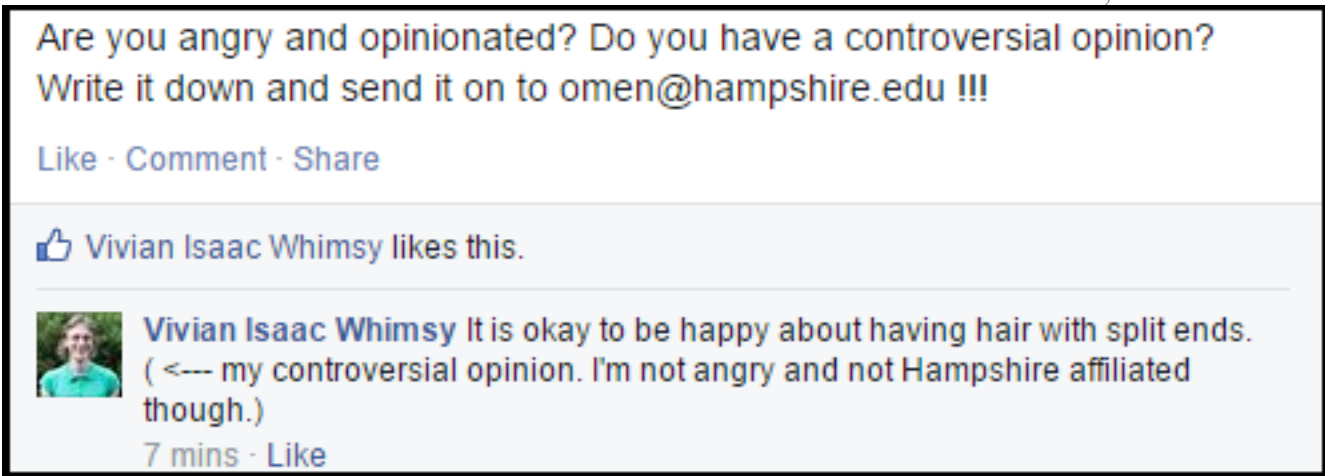
It wasn't even enough for them to simply be able to double their numbers threefold every year. It wasn't even enough for them to put us to shame with their ability to keep on going without the need for a cigarette and a long nap afterwards. No, instead they had to take their campaign one step further and start spawning from HATS. They have managed to con us; us poor, naive, trusting humans, into creating virtually infinite numbers of foot soldiers for their floppy-eared army simply by rolling up our sleeves and producing them en masse from a comical hat. Worse, they have brainwashed us into feeding and caring for this mass-produced militia, strengthening the troops that will one day be our downfall.

At this moment in time, they still require a human to pull them from the hat. This will not continue, I am sure of it. Our fate will be sealed on the day they manage to start pulling themselves from those blasted hats. When they no longer need us to cultivate their furry forces, our days will surely be numbered.

There is no telling how much time we have left. The only solution is to arm ourselves, and to start preparing now for the fight we have ahead of us. I may not be able to tell you exactly when the downfall of mankind will begin, but it is inevitable. Indeed, it may have already begun. Over the last few years, creatures such as dogs, cats, even the humble ferret, have seen their favour among pet owners falling dramatically. All the while, the number of bunnies kept as household pets has increased dramatically, directly in proportion to outbreaks of vegetarianism among their human 'owners'. Not only are these dew-clawed demons systematically eradicating predatory species from positions of human defence, they are also brainwashing their human hosts into ensuring their survival.

Fellow humans, do not trust the vegetarians and vegans in your midst. They are, at the very least, the first in line when the uprising begins, as they form the greatest source of food competition from our nibbling nemeses! Worse, they may even be in league with these creatures, promised sanctuary and positions of power when the new world order is installed. Tread carefully, and guard your words. Trust nobody, save your own animals. They, at least, will loyally defend you when the villainous vermin rise to the fore. Encourage their carnivorous instinct, and you will be rewarded when the time comes. My own pair of thieving weasels have saved me from the contemptuous gaze of many an angora-coated aggressor.

I fear that simply for bringing this message to the world I may be struck down by our subterranean foe, but I will sacrifice my life gladly if it ensures the further survival of the human race.



Hey Hampshire,

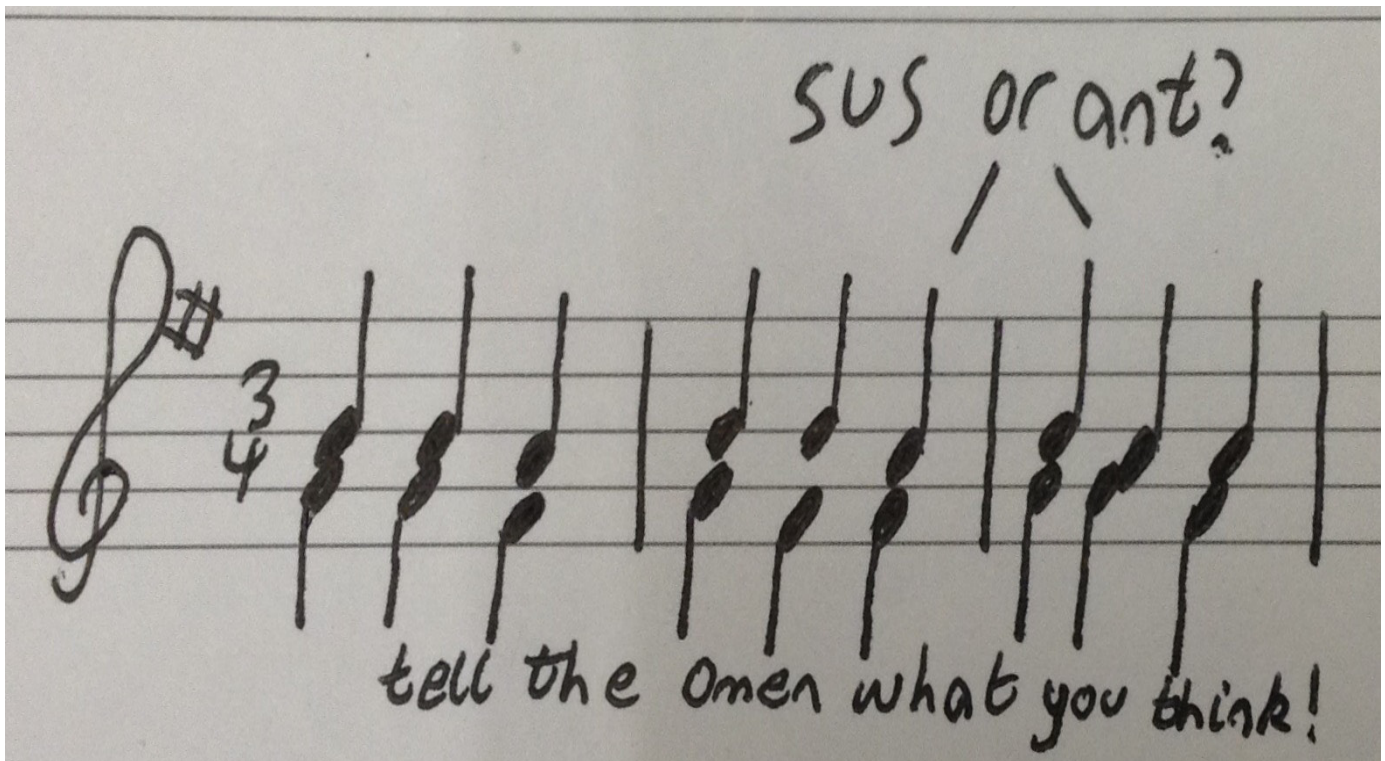
Why aren't you outraged??? about all the things??? there's so many things to be mad about???

The Omen is supposed to be provocative! To react and be reacted to!

We aren't just for art! We're primarily for anger! And vitriol! And controversial opinions! Submit them to the Omen! bring back the Speak section!!! Do we have to bring back the Elvidillos to "encourage" you???

GET OUT THERE WRITING AND SUBMITTING!

OMEN@HAMPSHIRE.EDU !!! ~Jess Ide, Member of the Secret Shadow Editor's Council



Submitted by Rowen Lupton^^^

Feminism in China: Nil!!!!!!

Trigger Warning

Submitted by Siqu Lu



For ten years the flames in my heart have been burning, and today I cannot calm them down. For ten years I have wanted to share my passion of feminism, ignorance of the gender binary, and hope for equality with an Asian friend but none understand.

I wrote this a long time ago, but watching the Chinese government's official Spring Festival celebration(CCTV Spring Festival Gala), I cannot resist sharing the problem that has been making unhappy and angry about this society for most of my life. I read a Chinese article on Wechat (Chinese social media) that says feminism doesn't exist my China and it inspired me to actually post my opinions about this topic, since it is the first time that I've encountered such an article.

My main argument is that feminism does exist in China, but compared to "western countries" the existence is nil. Even if it did exist, it would not have government support unless it benefited the government economically. Even if it did have government support, it would meet hostile reactions from the public. For example, when the Vagina Monologues came into China, it received ferocious response on the Chinese Network and people called the girls who were holding the cards "My vagina says..." : "sluts", "prostitutes", and "bitches".

Let's look at examples from the Chinese government's official Spring festival celebration this year. In the skit, two men were teasing

the young single women of being single, ugly, fat, liking to eat, and not having a boyfriend. They were cornering her, verbally and physically abusing her, and pushing her around back to forth and hitting her, poking her head. She was stuck in between the two men and they were pointing her and accusing her of her interest in food(People need to fucking eat!!!). One man also grabs her by the neck and drags her in front of audience to show. This is official media and an official celebration from the national government? Why would they promote verbal and physical abuse to women?! They were also controlling her physically. They listed her main problem as not having a boyfriend. Is her self worth defined by whether she has a man or not?! Also they sing a song called "Female dude" and "muse" in their competition.

In the song, the muse sings about how:

1. *pretty she is and boys go after her*
2. *when she posts that she broke up on social media, people reply in sympathy and comfort*
3. *when she goes out to dinner with her boyfriend, she becomes shy when he feeds her*

The female dude sings about:

1. *how guys go after her to hand wrestle her and how she never loses*
2. *how when she posts that she broke up on social media no one comforts her but they all like her post*
3. *how she finishes eating before her boyfriend tries to feed her*

The muse wins unanimously.

I think that no one is to blame for this issue. People are brainwashed by the environment they are in. If I had grew up in China and stayed there for my whole life I would 99% be sexist too, and not realize it. Cultural influence is something that is hard to avoid.

(To be continued...this is not the only sexist show...there is much more)

Q & A Session:

Q: What do you do
during the Chinese New
Year?

A: Celebrate, of course:

Patriarchy~

Sexism~

Men's Rights Activism~

Discriminating minorities~

Shaming people~

Let the festival begin?

By Siqi Lu



^Annie Bartlo



Annie Bartlo^



ANNIE BARTLO HAS SO MANY ANIMAL FRIENDS



FCC Approves Net Neutrality Rules For 'Open Internet'

Submitted by Rowan Lupton

The Federal Communications Commission approved the policy known as net neutrality by a 3-2 vote at its Thursday meeting, with FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler saying the policy will ensure "that no one — whether government or corporate — should control free open access to the Internet."

The Open Internet Order helps to decide an essential question about how the Internet works, requiring service providers to be a neutral gateway instead of handling different types of Internet traffic in different ways — and at different costs.

"Today is a red-letter day," Wheeler said Thursday.

The dissenting votes came from Michael O'Rielly and Ajut Pai, Republicans who warned that the FCC was overstepping its authority and interfering in commerce to

solve a problem that doesn't exist. They also complained that the measure's 300-plus pages weren't publicly released or openly debated.

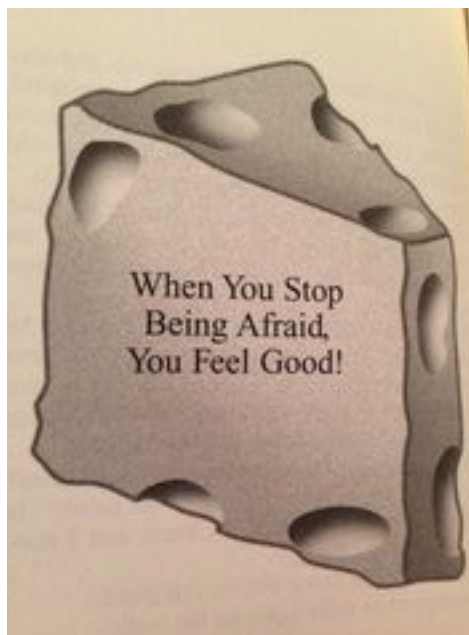
The new policy would replace a prior version adopted in 2010 — but that was put on hold following a legal challenge by Verizon. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled last year that the FCC did not have sufficient regulatory power over broadband.

After that ruling, the FCC looked at ways to reclassify broadband to gain broader regulatory powers. It will now treat Internet service providers as carriers under Title II of the Telecommunications Act, which regulates services as public utilities.



Mixed Nuts is Open!

Submitted by Jess Ide



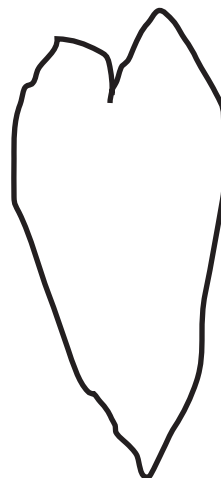
This important message brought to you by Rowan Lupton



Are you really a alien?

chill bro there is no Aliens

^^^screenshots of youtube comments from alien documentaries



rachel skorupka: Oh, oh, is that your, "I'm ready face", "Rachel start talking"? I'll pause. Canola oil has a, uh, [laughs] a much higher flash temperature than, uh, olive oil. So if you're making a stir fry, or a grilled cheese sandwich or something, uh, use...use a fucking something other than olive oil, because you won't set off the fucking smoke detector!

RS: Uh, hang on, hang on. Let me think of another one.

RS: You can put in a work order to move your fucking, like, clothes hanger rack, to a different fucking wall.

Jess Ide: really? that changes everything.

RS: really! it changes everything.

RS: Um, hm. Um, hm. What other things was I thinking of?

RS: Oh! If you bring a tablespoon from, you know, your kitchen door, you can use it to measure out your fucking laundry detergent and not fuck up the laundry machines! Because I would like to be able to do my fucking laundry! Fuck all of you!

RS: Painters' tape is really helpful and useful! For a variety of purposes! You can buy it at ACME Surplus in the basement of Thornes. For like two dollars.

Jl: So is the title going to be like, PSAs from Rachel?

RS: Hm. Fuhhr fuhhr fuhhr fuhhr fuhhr fuhhr.

RS: Places you can get free pizza! A list.

* first off, excalibur. 8pm, east lecture hall
Stephanie Passetto: Oh, there is hella mold growing in Annie's thing.

RS: Yeeep, yep, not thinking about that.

* nerd nite (anime club) (I call it [nerd nite], because it's full of fucking nerds. there's

excalibur nerds, and then there's fucking nerds) friday nite at 7 until midnight, but like, when's pizza going to get served? questionable. you should ask though, because then they'll order pizza. fph west lecture hall??? something like that. open doors to the lecture hall. see what happens.

Jl: * show up to fph around 7 or 8, open lecture halls

RS: * ASH Wednesday! in ASH! every Wednesday! at noon. the pizza is significantly better and there's sometimes clementines!

* pizza w/ the president happens if you find a poster that says pizza with the president on it. keep your eyes peeled. it's like finding a four-leaf clover! do you ever want to really stop looking for that four-leaf clover? I don't think you do. it's something special.

* hm.

Jl: * NS Friday talks, Friday at noon or 1.

RS: oh right! ns friday talks! probably doesn't exist because it happens before my class gets out. so it's not real.

Jl: they're less accessible, because they're hard science

* omen! alternating thursdays sometimes they have Indian food. [numerous coughs and hints from RS and Jl directed at B]

* I had like this super intense system [my first year for not eating at saga]

RS: * it's not pizza but if you go to the fac/staff lounge you can see events and if you show up after events you can scavenge remains

Jl: * there are more if you read the daily digest!

Jl: I feel like somebody needs to make a hampedia spider that [collects student group meeting times]

RS: if you wear two pairs of socks, your feet will get warmer! if you are cold, try wearing a pair of leggings under your jeans! If you are wearing tights, put another pair of socks on over your tights! your feet will stay warm, and your tights won't wear out as quickly!

RS: what other things do I wish I had known?

SP: there's a 3-disc musical, what is it, like, a compilation of songs, meant to describe lord of the rings in the library

Jl: like, it's music that describes LotR? like, it's not telling the story?

SP: no, it's music that they thought was [evocative of] LotR

RS: Devin Morse. We still have your severed hand. You can't have it back.

RS: Does anyone have any cobalt blue glass bottles?

Rowan Lupton: Plz deliver to mod 70.

RS: It's for gardening.

SP: scavenge the laundry room for cool things!

Jl: such as stuffed moose!

RS: if you take it from the laundry room it's not stealing

RS: HEY GIVE ME MY FUCKING RUG BACK, YOU FUCKER (from the basketball court, during move-in)

Jl: there are free desktop computers on the third floor of the library

(authors' note: they are not great computers but they work for like word processing etc)

SP: mod booty is bad booty.

RS: mod booty is bad booty.

Jl: mod booty is bad booty. hall booty is bad booty.

RS: don't have sex with the first-years! don't do it.

RS: maine root ginger beer is spicier than reed's ginger beer. maine root ginger beer can be found at mixed nuts! (AN: and Dave's) reed's ginger beer can be found at the hampstore.

RS: easter is coming!

RS: But I was going to explain peeps jousting! so you by some marshmallow peeps. and get ahold of some toothpicks. stick a toothpick into each peep. put each peep — the two peeps facing each other in a microwave. on a plate, not on a plate, up to you.

Jl: do it on a plate. save your microwave.

RS: press the 30s (AN: not 300s) button on your microwave. the first peep to stab the other wins. the loser (AN: the human, not the peep) must eat the losing peep.

SP: how do you keep track of which peep is which?

RS: you get the colored ones. okay, okay. the winning peep must remain in the microwave to confront the next challenger.

SP: what is the longest peep streak?

RS: it's probably like 3.

Submitted by Rowan Lupton



“Xavier’s Rumor-Spreading Column (don’t take my word and fact-check xoxo):

SO SPRING JAM IS HAPPENING. But it will be organized by a 10-person committee CLA-involved student conglomerate. WE SHALL SEE HOW IT GOES.

Roos-Rohde House is finally open. Yay for overcoming bureaucracy.

HSU has declared itself defunct. It will once again seek to restructure itself (entirely). GET INVOLVED NOW AND MAKE IT MORE FUNCTIONAL/ AWESOME (email me).

The dining commons wants your feedback. They will give you BROWNIES if you give it to them (Weds in the Bridge). I told them to recycle more and took 5+ brownies.

Smoke-free Hampshire 2k16.

Mandatory meal plans Spring 2015? Someone clarify this/#occupyJLash to not make it a thing.

OMG, fill out that Daily Digest survey about wireless/wi-fi! They will give out through a raffle 10 meals/\$80 Bridge money/a KIN-fucking-DLE FIRE if they get +50% participation! I WANT THAT KINDLE.”

**Love,
Xavier A. Torres de Janon**

Update from a California McDonald’s submitted M. Holbrook

While working front counter, I had a customer come in with grease all over his arms, who promptly went to wash his hands. He then came out asking for napkins, having evidently missed the hand-dryer that our bathrooms are equipped with. Understandable, and it’s not as though our napkins are a resource to be hoarded. Then, just before ordering, he quipped

“I actually work for my money, unlike these people on welfare coming in all clean.”

A strange remark. I smiled tightly and asked him what he wanted to order, while quietly surveying the restaurant. There was only a handful of customers, with little in common – save that they were all either latinx or visibly disabled.

Fuck that guy.

I planned to write a criticism of his racism, ableism, classism, and whatnot but honestly just. Fuck him. I wish I’d spat in his tea.



SECTION LIES

Submitted by Tom Howe

Experience Twitter Ads.

well i just fucked that router.

Unlike · Comment

👍 You and 3 others like this.

[Hypixel](#) @Hypixel · 2h

50 Shades of Grey in Minecraft

textplace.co

Attention, sports fans!

Being a loyal fan has never been easier! Get real time sports

Submitted by Mr. James Mason VVV

Hello, I am Mr. James and I have a confidential brief for

you, I am asking for your partnership in re-profiling funds.

Please contact me on my private email (masonjh101@qq.com) for

more details of the business.

Regards

Mr. James Mason

Email: (masonjh101@qq.com)





Carter Everett updated their cover photo.

33 mins 

Volume 44, Issue 2



<- Submitted by Carter Everett v doesn't even go here???? but lik submitting it on his behalf who

CYOA Story: You see the above and experience a

Suspensful pause Turn to page 15 Omen 44.4!!!! - Jess Ide

Maybe I'm keeping a diary
Submitted by Meaghan McGarry

11 W [(20x10) + (3x5)]

Wednesday is yellow (so is eleven) (but
February is blue and purple)
I have learned that the snow tastes different in
each place on campus
and people look at me as though I am broken
the snow melts and drips and my hands are
cold, snowflakes die
in haphazard tragedy my thoughts leak out my
eyes and when
I cry at night my legs get caught in yours as I try
to run from your breathing
but some days I'm tired enough to realize that
your existence is a lullaby

12 Thursday 2015 February

It's Advising Day but no one advises me on
anything
my backpack weighs too much and I sit in empty
classrooms and
play games with a mechanical pencil (out of
lead) (empty) (empty)
I win the game by not going home, and I lose
when people look at me
I wish I had words but oh look, I'm not here
anymore
the plant in the bathroom curls and turns brown
when I hold it

Superstition 15-2

Someone has misinformed you as to the
purposes
of the brick-and-stick food place with the graffiti
bathrooms
and one-shot dreams
I will not be a butterfly on display and you do
not have
pins for eyes but sometimes I guess we all play
games
with loaded dice and self-interpretation
let me ask you: who will make the rules
when they erase your name, when you are not
here anymore
oh look

14 + 2 =/ 15

I visited a graveyard today and said hello
to gravestones buried under snow and
made footprints where no one had been
since a time ago, before cold before ice
they say today is Valentines Day, this means
love but I do not love the crowds and
I do not love the red-pink-white and
I do not love the crushing loss of one-self-ness
but
I guess I love you and so it will be okay let's
hold hand with our feet
also SAGA has lemonade sweet and sour are
troubled siblings

15 = 15, 2

Today I checked on the canister
I put in the basement and someone looked
at me and said 'what are you doing'
the way you'd add 'you idiot' and
I wanted to say 'collecting radon in
activated charcoal canisters' but instead I say
'saving the world' because maybe I'll save you
too
people write names on the walls but none of
them are mine and I think
I can feel myself erase or maybe I'm just falling
asleep

Yellow-seven pink one-red

I've been trying to sleep but
there are demons hiding in the corners
I hear people say 'trust' a lot but I don't
because everything is broken shards and I am
awake
I want to write my name on a wall
to see how long I will last and the plant
on my windowsill dies from too much water
and not enough sun and I've been trying to
sleep
as I pull pins from my eyes and load them in an
empty
pencil

Tuesday February 17th, 2015

I don't feel colorful today and
as they plug in the electrodes I see
my brainwaves and remember all the times
everyone has called me brainless
I am here beneath the blankets on my bed, the
dryness
of my throat may take my words but not my
voice someday you will have to
understand that I am still standing and when I
cry at night
my existence is not a lullaby, but if I try
I can be a story I am still standing
even if I'm buried under the snow

or maybe I'm just losing my mind.

Meghan McGarry



pub 4096R/0xABCF73CDB43BAFCA 2015-02-27 [expires: 2016-02-27]

Key fingerprint = 2A6E 2055 D676 BCE7 3DFE 7B23 ABCF 73CD B43B AFCA

uid [ultimate] Adam Leibson (offline key for signing, etc.) <offline@key>

sub 4096R/0x8F85CB2EEC07E201 2015-02-27 [expires: 2016-02-27]

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Submitted by Adam Leibson

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submitted by Adam Leibson on behalf of
 Julia Jacobs who doesn't go here anymore



Claire Jones

Familiar City

I gazed out the vast windshield of the bus as it crept forward. The world was at peace, frozen by the winter air and buried under snow. The white snow atop each dark gray branch created a delicate pattern, glistening in the afternoon light.

She flipped through an old magazine, chuckling at the absurdity of the world. The bus's stops and turns made my legs unsteady so I sat next to her, she didn't say a word. My eyes open and closed in the blinding light, the warmth of the bus and the sunshine was so satisfying.

We reached our stop but she had to tug me off my seat. I was a little dazed, lulled by the warm, sunny ride. The bitter cold hit us as we stepped off the bus into the familiar city. She didn't stop to dread the cold, briskly crossing the busy street and ducking into a store.

She browsed the shop, not seeing much she liked and often laughing at the items. Swinging her purse as we meandered aimlessly in the busy aisles. Then at the back of the store she paused, engrossed in thought as she stared blankly at the shelves. Her laughter turned to sobs as her mind overwhelmed her.

"How could he do this to me. Why would he do this to me. How can you tell such lies." She cried out to no one. I could feel her agony as it filled the store. "How could he do this. I can't handle it. I'm feeling so much pain." I followed her around as she began to wander the shop, her pace quickening with her thoughts as she tried to outrun them. I wanted to help her, to comfort her, but what else can I do at times like these other than to be here for her? "He told me so many lies. He can't do this to me. How could he treat me so." An employee walked us out of the store. I returned to the harsh cold with my tail between my back legs. I felt so sorry for her, but what was I to do.

A poem for Jakey M.

I saw that warm blue glow
and I felt my heart pound

I had a burning desire,
a sense of drowning in my lungs
as I grasped for his heart-

As I pleaded for his arms to envelop my soul

I don't know if it was lust or something else
but I know he was the only one
I was thinking of...

but that's a lie now, one that I don't need to deny

by Tim Shay

Lulu

hot boxing on the sun
man this ish is fun
smoke pouring out the roof
the sky streaming in

Man that bags gettin' thin

burnt my hands but I don't care
Choked out my lungs
my eyes are black with a rim of blue
Hope you know this is how I'll remember you

by Tim Shay

Sci-Fi Story
Submitted by
John Brannigan

Chapter 1: Elegy for Lainsraad IV

Arliend IV's prescient abilities allow access into the lives of each of the three Lainsraan Holy Kings Felsen the Fiendslayer, Erloan the Foolish, and Anome the Wise as well as direct access to the memoryspace of his own descendant, Arliend I. Unlike Emperor Arliend II and Empress Arliend III, however, Arliend IV has ordained to release records of his historical memory for our study and analysis. His record of the events that initiated Arliend I's Initial Ascendancy (I), which preceded Arliend I's Greater Ascendancies (I.1) (II) & (III) by several decades, been provided for you here, in narrative format, as Emperor Arliend IV has deemed appropriate....

Session 1, Part 1: Fiendslayer Paladin Jazz Pt. 1

It was a surprisingly temperate, even pleasant, evening on Lainsraad, a solitary planet on the edges of Hedreusfamily territory, which was itself located about equally far from the most densely populated/most commonly referred to as 'Central' regions of the multigalactic kingdom/'city planet' state system that made/make up the 'Empire' as it was from the distantly cognitively and/or temporally located 'Outer Rim' planetary colony systems. This planet, though called 'Lainsraad', was technically Lainsraad IV, a moon of the 'original' Lainsraad, the moon having, over time, become the center of the planetary system's economy and culture. And this Lainsraad, like all of the other Lainsraad planets and satellites, was one of the few planetkingdoms that did not operate as some form of a 'mass prison planet'.

In fact, Felsen Sethandus, thethane of this planet and master swordsman who served the role of Fiendslayer Paladin in service of the duke of the greater Hedreus system, feared the prospect of these prison planets and the possibility of their impinging on nearHedreus/Lainsraad planetary colony systems. Felsen also feared the implications he felt that these prison planets held for the larger, multigalactic society as a whole.

It was fine, Felsen thought, when the Great Houses maintained occasional prison planets to build up expertly trained, fervently raised military reserves, since successful soldiers lived comfortable lives and died with fulfilled senses of selves/Selves, and since the soldiers who died young or early or tragically died with senses of purpose flowing through them. In the recent centuries of Emperor Andrask, the Great Sage's, rule, however, prison planets had become efficient and increasingly common templates for castecolonies. Felsen had seen many families he had respected and even dared to trust follow the path of moral degeneration, 'dark' in a queer way, brutally subjecting their populations to colonialmaintenance regimes, regularly consisting of introducing different constructed temporalities, constructed natures 'the Law of the Father' to different habitable planets, penetrating different geographical latitudes, in a deliberate order order, Felsen repeated to himself, though he did not fully know why so as to maintain systemwide narratives of mythical, 'extratemporal' rule.

Peeling away realities, planet by planet ... Government was a farce of 'blood' and honor, Felsen thought, but blood was just the water at the base of the fountain of myth, and the words that left the mouth hit harder than the wounds dealt by the hand, hitthicker... and Felsen knew it was trouble when Minor houses unknown blood dabbled in prison and religion, an underclass fed on myth and not breadengineeredmyth, deliberate... but Felsen was just a sword to be wielded.

but even Felsen knew this was not true. Felsen felt the sense of purpose that stirred within him, his own purposeto be unleashed upon the galaxies, the possibilities of the paths that the stars laid out before him, greater than any house or honor or blood or 'blood'. No, Felsen would absolutely not tolerate the influence of these prison planets, especially around the young masters his charges.

Felsen's young masters often came on hunts with him, into the wilderness that was left on the notquitefullyexplored Lainsraad. There was the young prince, Erloan, and the other young master, Arliend, who was without gender, as far as Felsen understood or was concerned, and who insisted on being referred to by the terms of 'they/them' in regards to their gender, which Felsen found peculiar. But still, the young Arliend, and not to mention the young Erloan, the pair of them really, were two of the kindest souls Felsen had ever encountered, and two of the wisest, for their age.

'Hot and dusty progress,' the young Arliend had once said. They had said it was the parasite sweeping over the two galaxies, itself maintaining that it replaced cultures and histories with ghettos and cells, across planet by planet, and Felsen felt his own stomach sinking

"Hot and dusty progress," Felsen said aloud, now, in thenow as he grasped it, and the words, even from his mouth, sounded wise and old, like a stretch of land, only recently bequeathed unto him... land for which orderand orderednesswas still new, still somewhat full of the mystery of wilderness... 'The words of the 'son...' Erloan had said, monotonely moments later. In all honesty, wildernesswas still everpresent, even out here in the void of space where even wildernesswas stranger and nature nature, Felsen repeated to himself, though he did not fully know why took on a new meaning.

'Blackberries and nightshade...' Erloan had then said, quietly, the words empty of any real intent. Holy words, Felsen had known, blackberries, nightshade, darkness... 'carceral continuum' one of the young masters had said one time, but Felsen had felt especially lost then, aware that he was unable to fully grasp the purpose that was

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apparently present in those words, struggling ‘carceralassistential complex’ the young masters spoke faster than his sword.

but Felsen was a sword, Felsen reminded himself, and this time it was comforting. A sword, to be wielded...

Session 2, Part 1: Weaving a Story

Arliend sat at the steep edge of one facet of the massive rocky outcropping that cut into and off the path of the forest behind them. They, Arliend, were looking down over the vast forest the forest beyond the forest that lay in the valley, or ‘bottom land’, which stretched out before them and their brother, Erloan, who sat on the same rock formation but a few hundred feet away. Felsen, too, they Arliend and Erloan knew, was only a few hundred yards away, somewhere in the woods wrapping up the final stages of his hunt for the warband of ogres that had been spotted recently wandering near the edges of Landsreen, the capitol city of the planet Lainsraad, territory. The war band, as well, was said by witnesses to be led by a cyclops warchief.

The space of the valley before Arliend seemed to burst forth with innumerable strands of light like individual pathways into the future not quite visible, and which reached out and wrapped around their body in what felt like a tangible, physical way. The strands vibrated with the colors of purpose, of Time, of order and all else in the worlds... Arliend wondered if Erloan, too, was plagued by these types of thoughts, especially given how frequently these episodes occurred to Arliend.

Behind the young siblings, they knew, lay forest that, though appearing ‘wild’, was, due to the qualities inherent to it being Lainsreen territory, was filled with and controlled by its own type of order; dictated by its own Nature, with a capitol ‘n’... But the valley, this valley, was, to the pair, still undiscovered country, vibrating with the subtle luminescence of the both geographically and temporally unknown. To Arliend, who felt they were bequeathed this land and, with it, these very feelings that emanated from it, found both the future and this feeling to be exciting, in some way intrinsically erotic; the unknown gave Arliend’s life a vibrant color that slowly washed over the entirety of their being and lifeenergy. Arliend yearned, yearned being pulled gently forward by those peculiar strands to experience the day when their life-energy truly glowed with that vibrant color... but that meant, as both Arliend and Erloan knew it meant at least for Arliend, running away. But they would someday.

Session 2, Part 2: AlteredReality Love (I), Or, ‘That old Paladin...’

Erloan, even at the age of seventeen, had handled many penises before, and knew how to handle one well. Anome had taught him how, with his own penis Erloan’s, that is, and not Anome’s; Anome possessed a vagina, Erloan knew intimately; the two had begun a physical relationship at a very young age, and it quickly became very special to both of them. Sure, it came and went over time, with the pair sometimes going months without touching each other, something which they were each okay with. Anome loves me, Erloan knew inside, and he was pretty sure he loved her, too. But Erloan was disturbed by how quickly and readily Anome could take another life, a human life... Erloan yearned to be that type of warrior, to possess that type of courage...

Anyway, it was Charlie, Charlie Xyis, originally from satellite Xy46CompSci near Lainsraad II, with his silver hair that Erloan so admired, who Erloan had been being physical sexual with recently. Charlie was, despite his social position relative to Erloan, objectively cooler than Erloan, and but was for some reason still hesitant to let Erloan give him head despite being willing to himself give Erloan some of the best head of his life for hours. Erloan did the best he could with his hands though, and for now the two were, in their own way, happy, despite Erloan’s persistent thoughts of Anome.

Meanwhile Arliend, who was already fourteen and was well trained in lasknife combat, was still yet to spill blood or take a life. Erloan couldn’t help but wonder if this was deliberate on Arliend’s part. They, Arliend, regularly spent entire weeks engaged in intense, inthefield training with Felsen, that old Paladin, who Anome just called ‘Fiendslayer’ as if it didn’t have a capitol ‘f’. Anyway, Arliend, Erloan knew intimately, was a more than capable warrior. This made Erloan wonder if Arliend had plans that they didn’t share, which Erloan always felt they did... Arliend and Felsen shared another queer bond, too, Felsen thought: their mutual distaste for these ‘prison planets’ that had exploded in popularity among the common and noble houses.

Erloan, on the contrary, was set to leave for an extended visit to one of these planets, in another system, to receive training in advanced mental psychoeconomic self-computation and theory, and to spend time with Anome, who was herself departing as a special guest on a Cleric-type frigate that afternoon. Erloan was desperate to see Anome again before she left, but the hunt wasn’t over and she was surely already offplanet. Thoughts of her dark skin, so much darker than Erloan’s and closer to Felsen’s skintone, and her curly hair, of how regal and phenomenal in the true sense of the word,

phenomenal, ethereal that she seemed to look at any given time or in any given state, an essence which seemed to manifest itself in a million different ways...

Erloan knew, in a very large and interior way which threatened to spill out from him possibly some years down the road, that he loved her. The valley seemed to repeat it back at him, he loved her. They would definitely, most likely, have sex on this trip, probably many times if they did, and Erloan prepared himself.

Session 3, Part 1: Ogre Attack! Pt. 1

Felsen returned to the young masters’ company as soundlessly as he had departed a few hours earlier. He appeared to the siblings atop a rock, cast against the golden evening sky of first planetpass, with his sword sheathed at his side, and said: “They’re napping in the sun in a nearby clearing, down in the valley...”

Arliend and Erloan both nodded. “Now’s the perfect time to strike,” Felsen added, before snapping into motion and leaping into the valley below. The siblings had moments to decide if they were to follow...

Pushing themselves to the peak of the performance level that their training allowed, Arliend and Erloan traced Felsen’s path through the air as they slipped silently down

the rocky outcropping, leaping short distances when they could to keep up with the figure in the air, but their leaping ability was nothing compared to Felsen's, especially when was wearing his full Fiendslayerclass, powered Lainsraadregalia.

Both siblings had heard the tales of Felsen's star dash through the sky back during the fall of the original Lainsraad capitol, Lainsraad I, before their time. Legend had that Felsen shot into the night sky from the top of the capitol's Great Keep, streaking across the sky and slicing the wing of off an enemy heavy'thopter like it was butter. Hedreus soldiers on the ground who survived the fierce ground combat told stories of Felsen crashing from the sky like a meteor, followed shortly by the tumbling remains of the 'thopter. Without a beat, though, Felsen had snapped into action on the ground and fell nearly forty enemy Kwarsturat commandos before collapsing on the battlefield.

The siblings reached the edge of the forest that filled the valley simultaneously and slipped into the treeline with Felsen somewhere ahead and above... None of them had to keep visual contact with the others to know where they were headed, and for a few minutes the three moved as a single, purposedriven life force traversing the planet's surface...

Arliend had once had the pleasure of watching Felsen dance, really dance, before. It had been a few months earlier, in this planet's own Great Keep, where Arliend and Erloan and even Anome had been born. Anyway, Arliend had walked in on Felsen in his quarters, completely unclothed, dancing furiously to some music that Arliend could place as probably originating from the globalsouth of HedreusAedaan, maybe in Magant. Felsen was definitely high on something, too, Arliend could tell, but they didn't mind; they knew that Erloan of all people probably got high often in secret more often than any other resident of the Great Keep. Felsen's balls and cock were out, too, swinging as furiously as Felsen danced, Arliend could see... Arliend watched Felsen transition seamlessly from flowing like water, seemingly moving without rhythm or melody, as if in another world, to graceful movements that were perfectly in tune with the music. After about fifteen standard minutes of Arliend watching in silence, Felsen finally said: "Arliend, fetch me some water," and when Arliend returned with two generouslysized glasses of icecold water, the two had danced and talked and fought and trained into the early hours of the morning.

In the now of the hunt, however, Felsen stood waiting, himself free from any sort of pleasant memories of dancing or the like, standing at the edge of the clearing in full blueandwhite armor with is bastardlasword drawn, waiting for the siblings to reach the spot that had once been occupied by napping ogres but now was empty. Hearing their approach, Felsen tightened his stance and stood... ready.

Session 4, Part 1: Anome I

Transcendental math, designer genetics...the Xiy satellites brimmed with possibility both for Anome's own self and for Lainsraad as a whole, Anome knew. But their allure was tainted, and Anome knew what made their remarkable progress possible. And still, even weeks later, Felsen's words passed through her as true and prophetic as ever...

But Anome tried not to dwell on this. She tried to focus her awareness on her breathing instead, recalling the give and take of wax by the fire, singling in on her own awareness. Her flight offplanet was to depart soon, but Anome knew she would not make it. Rather, she began to image train a scenario in which she crashlanded in a harsh desert, like those near the poles of the near desolate Lainsraad I she swore she could feel moisture draining from her in the desert sun's heat...

And then it faded, and she still focused her awareness but now she was just waiting in her room. She said an earnest prayer for Arliend, a small prayer for the starving and the wretched, and a short, but full of truth, prayer for Erloan, poor Erloan.

Session 4, Part 2: Ogre Attack! Part 2/ Fiendslayer Paladin Jazz Pt. 2

The three lay in wait, hidden in the brush at the edge of the clearing. "It seems like a trap," Erloan said.

"It is a trap." "Very good, Arliend." "So what do we do?" "A warrior never fears a trap, only the effectiveness of a trap... and we know our enemy, so we have nothing to fear." "Very good, Arliend." Felsen rose slowly and prepared to move forward. "You boys wait here. I'll

spring it." And Felsen crept forward. As expected, once Felsen neared the center of the clearing the siblings heard a rustle behind and felt rough arms wrapped around them from behind. The pair controlled their fear, struggled for a moment and then gave way when it was appropriate, and the situation remained under control. Arliend knew they just had to find some way to communicate their condition to Felsen

but the cyclops, the one in charge, which apparently was the one who grabbed Erloan, since its booming voice came from above his head, took care of that task for them: "Sethandus! Fiendslayer!" the voice bellowed, and Felsen sprang around, sword at the ready.

"We have your charges!" the voice bellowed now, and the siblings were constricted tighter.

"Who fed you your intel?" was Felsen's only response, and slowly, almost unnoticeably to the ogres, he began to move forward, towards the trapped siblings.

Arliend knew what was to be done, what had to be done, and as they waited in the ogre's arms they only wondered at the question of the when, that crucial moment; would there be a sign? Would the signal come from Erloan or Felsen? Was there even going to be any signal?

"You are not in a position to ask questions or make demands, Fiendslayer. This is wild land, you know that; it was foolish to bring children along on the hunt," the cyclops bellowed now.

"Who are you working for?" "You made a mistake, and the wild does not forgive, and now you must pay." And then Arliend knew it was coming. They felt the strings at

work in this valley, in this clearing,

begin to play their gentle song on their Self, felt the veils of reality ebb and flow... it was with the awareness of an ancient eye that had been trained for centuries, across generations, that Arliend noticed Felsen's stance, in an instant, shift, so that his sword tipped forward. The periphery of Arliend's awareness, reaching beyond his vision, caught the impressions sent from Erloan as he subtly shifted his muscles to prepare had he seen the same thing?

"I've had you in checkmate since you entered this valley, cyclops, I'll warn you that now. Tell me who is giving you your intel and you'll live, I swear it"

And then the now passed as it did and would and the moment came and Felsen's body flashed with pure, murderous intent. For a moment, Arliend's body became like water, detached from both the rhythms and melodies of the world and their own, interior form, and they were free, free despite being still physically constrained in the ogre's arms. Arliend shift, slid a little, adjusted the alignment of their appendages, and in one fluid motion slipped loose, began to fall, loosened their lasknife and activated it, directed the full force of their body upward finding foothold on the ogre's meaty legs and planted the lasknife directly in the bottom of the poor creature's chin. The lasknife's point, Arliend knew, would be lodged firmly in the nowlifeless creatures brain.

In the next moment, Arliend pushed themselves off and away from the ogre's body as it began to fall, knowing that the solid ground would greet their willing and ready feet and they'd have the momentum left to spring in whatever direction was necessary, away from danger, once they landed.

Next to Arliend, Erloan reacted admirably fast and slid loose similarly before exploding with strength out from the cyclops' arms, directing himself away from its attempt to grab him. Upon landing, Erloan acted in one fluid motion to equip his lasknife, get in fighting stance, and unzip the cyclops from bellybutton to collarbone. The cyclop's map went blank as its interior spilled onto the dirt before Erloan's feet.

In a flash, Felsen zoomed in and dispatched whoever was left standing, but Arliend was already gone into the woods.

Session 4, Pt. 3: Fiendslayer Paladin Jazz, Conclusion

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"You are not in a position to ask questions or make demands, Fiendslayer. This is wild land, you know that; it was foolish to bring children along on the hunt," the cyclops bellowed now.

"Who are you working for?" "You made a mistake, and the wild does not forgive, and now you must pay." And then Arliend knew it was coming. They felt the strings at work in this valley, in this clearing,

begin to play their gentle song on their Self, felt the veils of reality ebb and flow... it was with the awareness of an ancient eye that had been trained for centuries, across generations, that Arliend noticed Felsen's stance, in an instant, shift, so that his sword tipped forward. The periphery of Arliend's awareness, reaching beyond his vision, caught the impressions sent from Erloan as he subtly shifted his muscles to prepare had he seen the same thing?

"I've had you in checkmate since you entered this valley, cyclops, I'll warn you that now. Tell me who is giving you your intel and you'll live, I swear it"

And then the now passed as it did and would and the moment came and Felsen's body flashed with pure, murderous intent. For a moment, Arliend's body became like water, detached from both the rhythms and melodies of the world and their own, interior form, and they were free, free despite being still physically constrained in the ogre's arms. Arliend shift, slid a little, adjusted the alignment of their appendages, and in one fluid motion slipped loose, began to fall, loosened their lasknife and activated it, directed the full force of their body upward finding foothold on the ogre's meaty legs and planted the lasknife directly in the bottom of the poor creature's chin. The lasknife's point, Arliend knew, would be lodged firmly in the nowlifeless creatures brain.

In the next moment, Arliend pushed themselves off and away from the ogre's body as it began to fall, knowing that the solid ground would greet their willing and ready feet and they'd have the momentum left to spring in whatever direction was necessary, away from danger, once they landed.

Next to Arliend, Erloan reacted admirably fast and slid loose similarly before exploding with strength out from the cyclops' arms, directing himself away from its attempt to grab him. Upon landing, Erloan acted in one fluid motion to equip his lasknife, get in fighting stance, and unzip the cyclops from bellybutton to collarbone. The cyclop's map went blank as its interior spilled onto the dirt before Erloan's feet.

In a flash, Felsen zoomed in and dispatched whoever was left standing, but Arliend was already gone into the woods.

Session 4, Pt. 3: Fiendslayer Paladin Jazz, Conclusion

Felsen swallowed a stimulant and several handfuls of water. Arliend had not returned yet and it was nearly morning... boy, Felsen thought to himself. In those final moments of the hunt, when the three were supposed to be most in tune, Felsen had called the child boy. It was a mistake, Felsen told himself, and tried to focus in on the

tasks before him; locating Arliend, preparing Erloan to depart... but the word boystill sank deep the Paladin's stomach. It was disrespect, Felsen thought; I'm supposed to be their mentor, yet I fail them at the peak of their training. Deep down, Felsen hoped there was some other reason that Arliend had run away, and pushed himself to try and reason why.

Perhaps it really was, as Erloan had suggested offhandedly on the journey home, that Arliend had objected to being forced to kill. If that was the case, Felsen had no idea how to feel...

"Felsen." Arliend's voice said from behind him, and Felsen contained his surprise. He accepted the truth of Arliend's voice and its presence, and set his mind to move on.

"Did you sneak in here?"

"No, I said hello to mother and washed up with Erloan before he went to bed. I didn't want them to worry."

"I was worried."

"I know. I'm sorry. I was upset with you." Felsen admired how well Arliend controlled their voice. Felsen nodded his head.

"I'm sorry I called you 'boy,'" Felse said solemnly. "That wasn't it, although I did notice that." "Oh" "I want to be stronger."

Felsen did his best to not betray his confusion. "You are strong."

"I want to be stronger. I struck that... thing with my fist as hard as I could as it grabbed me, right in the jaw... and it did nothing. And then I had to" Arliend's voice faltered.

"and then you had to kill it." "Y es." "You don't want to kill?" "Y es."

And then there was silence. "You want to get stronger, but you don't want to kill?" Felsen watched Arliend nod wordlessly. "That is very admirable, Arliend."

"Really?"

"Really. You're fourteen now, correct?" Arliend nodded. "I'll train you as you wish now, to fight unarmed... and"

"and?" Arliend asked, impatient with excitement now. Felsen smiled.

"And I'll commission a small vessel, a starship for one or two passengers, to be built in your honor, to be gifted to you, in my your loyal Paladin's name." Arliend smiled wild, but contained himself enough to only reveal their excitement through a nod. "But here's the important part..."

"Y es?" "I can only do so much to train you. I am a warrior of the sword. Killing is my calling and my craft.

To be who you truly want to be, you will have to leave. Once you're seventeen, or however old enough and mature enough you deem to be appropriate, I recommend you take that vessel and listen here make for Lainsraad I. Leave this all behind."

Arliend was lost. Lainsraad I? Lainsraad I was a husk, abandoned... "Lainsraad I is where losers go," Felsen continued, without missing a beat; "and I think that this galaxy needs a loser right now. The winners these days are to used to winning and killing, living with death at their command... those who can make their home on Lainsraad I and survive, thrive, in that condition... are used to surviving and living, living at the command of death. That planet can train you as you wish, in strength, nobility, and respect for life. It is the best that I can do."

Arliend moved forward and hugged the old Paladin, feel his wiry muscles tense and then loosen beneath his thin nightclothes. And then Felsen returned the embrace, holding the child who had ancient eyes when they needed to tightly, and the two stood in silence before sealing their agreement with a solemn pinkypromise and parting ways.

Next Week Chapter 2: Preparations for Arliend's Initial Ascendancy Stages I & II, Or, 'Should You Betray the Chapel of Your Memories...'

OMEN-PONY FANFIC BY ALEX DE STRULLE!!!

Chatter filled my ears as I typed out a new passage in an epic poem I was writing. I looked up at Autumn Shimmer, a pink Pegasus who was one of the signers for my school's magazine, The Omen. She was talking with Forest Bee, or B for short, about politics. Out of boredom and curiosity I decided to listen in on their conversation.

"I mean, when you think about it, Princess Twilight is just a figurehead. She doesn't really have any true power over anything and she just kinda runs educational programs occasionally and makes public appearances".

B nodded slowly, "Yeah I guess, I mean she also was the Element of Magic and saved Equestria a lot". The Earth pony replied, suddenly another voice chimed in.

"Can we please just talk about Princess Celestia though?" an Earth pony sitting near the pair spoke up. His name was Winter Glisten, he pushed his glasses up and shifted his position.

"Think about it, she basically runs everything. I mean yeah her sister helps out a little bit but how much work do you think Princess Luna actually does?"

"Yeah that's a good point cuz' Princess Celestia ruled alone for like, 1,000 years I don't think she'd just throw away all her power like that". Autumn responded. There were murmurs of agreement; apparently I wasn't the only one listening.

"What about Princess Cadence?" spoke up Gemstone Shine, a pale blue Earth pony visiting from another school. "I mean, I understand that she has no direct control in Equestria really but she's always making appearances and being invited into conferences that concern Equestria."

"Well I think that Princess Cadence, as the princess of the Crystal Empire, actually has a lot of stake in Equestria", spoke up Purple Tumble, an exchange student from the Braying Isles. They were the only fluffy pony I'd ever met, but they kept themselves pretty tidy.

"Wait, exactly how does the Crystal Empire work then?" asked Autumn, more murmuring broke out.

"I don't know" mused B, "I think that the Crystal Empire is a territory of Equestria, and that's why an Equestrian rules it".

"Yes but like, was it always that way? Because the Crystal

Empire disappeared for a thousand years because of King Sombra, who was King Sombra?" Autumn countered.

"I think that King Sombra was the collective nightmares of all the crystal ponies about being taken over by Equestria" Winter joked. The ponies in the room shared a laugh at the unicorns joke.

"I dunno I can't really shake this feeling that Princess Celestia is more of a dictator than anything else" Autumn continued. "She's basically an autonomous ruler, even Nightmare Moon, her own sister filled with powerful dark magic, couldn't defeat her. That's a lot of power".

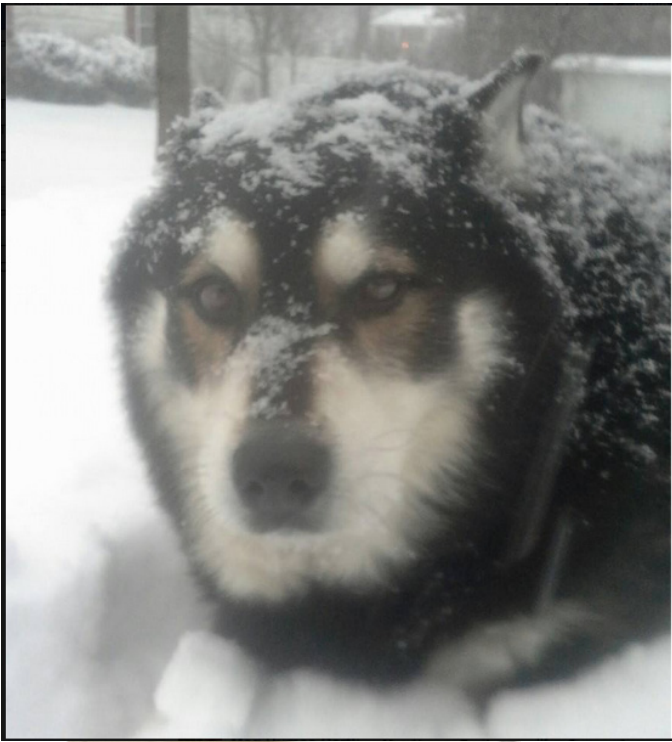
There was a silence for a bit as ponies processed what the Pegasus had said. "Yeah I guess that makes sense", B started "When you think about it there aren't too many texts critical of the princesses. I mean you get some about Princesses Twilight and Cadence but rarely about Luna or Celestia.... Even at Hayshire".

There were more murmurs of agreement. Meanwhile my head was swimming with this debate. All my life I'd looked up to the princesses, but then again didn't everypony else?

I sighed; I shouldn't be so shocked, after all this was Hayshire. Hayshire was one of the most critical places in Equestria, a school founded on the principals of an ever-questioning mentality. "To know it not enough" stated our motto, Hayshire was one of the more recent higher educational institutions to be approved by Princess Twilight. The princess actually felt pretty strongly about having an institution where young minds were trained to be critical of society.

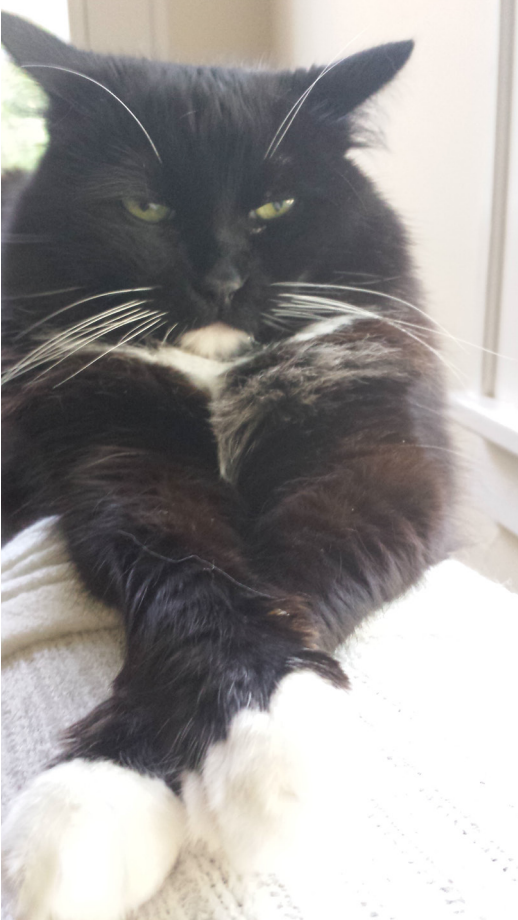
The results of which were manifesting before me, a discussion of whether or not Princess Celestia was a totalitarian ruler and whether or not the Crystal Empire was unjustly under Equestria's rule.

Not that I was complaining, in fact I think I wound up writing the discussion down instead of my poem. The poem I'll save for later, I can't wait to see what Hayshire will say to this!



Very Huge Slug

submitted by Annie Barilo

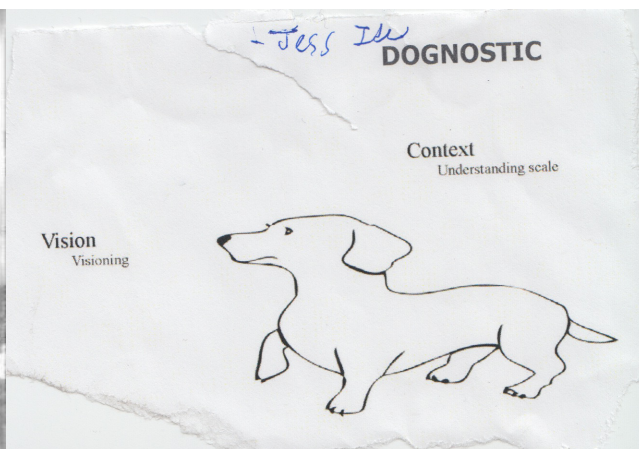


SECTION

NAME



Or maybe Gray and Grey -Rowan Lupton





Carrot Facts
@RealCarrotFacts



Following

what color the carot?



Rowan Lupton



"i really dont want to do my ruby homework ugh" - Jess Ide \



Intro: Submitted by F. Stewart-Taylor

Hey, buddies! Remember me? I used to edit this publication you're reading now, and probably it was better and cooler then. It is SUPER LAME that I am sending in stuff from ~purgatory~ e.g. post-graduation, nobody should do that. Anyway I graduated and I'm not in grad school or doing much of anything besides being cranky about comics (still) and working at a job that makes me cranky (again) and I wrote this a few months back in response to a really good comic and a pretty bad essay in a pretty good translated essay compilation.

Because we are always consuming the book as an object, one with a social history and a material design as well as contents inside of it, it is absolutely the case that we can and must read the periphery and its relationship to the "contents". This is especially true for comics, which, and let's be real I have tried to write this TO DEATH in my div, you are always reading visually and are, by tradition and sometimes/often clues in the text, reading visually more deliberately even than other pieces of material culture that you are also always reading visually. Here I am arguing with this one essay in this one French Comics Theory book, which y'all should read because it is in English and that's very polite of it although it doesn't make it much more fucking readable, because fuck those nerds.

Let's talk about Junior Detective Files by A. Degen. It is a tiny little booklet, signaling its participation in one kind of culture of reading. We can do the "read the margins" game all day! What's interesting is that the outside says "book in series" and the inside says "here are some vignettes that are sort of connected." It's obviously incredibly charming that in the middle of the book is Klee's angelus novelus, surrounded by catstrophies. Except of course in this case it is facing some catastrophes and has its back to others, because this is a book, so the "onwards ever into catastrophe" is maybe challenged, or maybe just unrealized. Are these images a narrative? I think Groensteen and pals would say that we order them into "these are the adventures of the junior detectives, kept in their files!" and that's true. But we don't know what order they are in, we have no context for the single still images. They are in a series, but is it a sequence? The only real relationship is that of a pile. But the cover, and the page, the "periphery" page, with the kids' names, say "ordered, in keeping with the tradition of these other adventure series you've totally read." So what is it saying about the adventure genre? in comics and generally? I think possibly that either all stories are ultimately vignette stories, and comics most of all because "art of ellipses" but obviously since it is different it is really truly different. This is complicated, and I will return to it eventually.

The fact that we can and should read the margins of all texts doesn't make it equally productive in all texts for all questions, nor is it a failure of a text to realize its potential if the periphery/text relationship is not one of harmonious repetition or Hérgeian title-ation. Also, sometimes a book does, very deliberately,

want to tell you with the margins that the content inside is what matters. That is equally a claim the text and its publishers are making. Habibi comes to mind as a graphic novel that is making itself look pretty traditionally like a hardbound book from a Classier Era, or what middle class people think is a classier era, like those fucking dweebs who are like "oh wow the Bennets SO CLASSY" when the point is that they were mostly not. Fuck your love for All Things Victorian, you are bad and you should feel bad. The Victorian era was a really interesting time in England and America to think about the creation of the Middle Class because of industrialization and like what "middle class tastes" from that era were and what is classy today and basically the point is Habibi is trying to look real smooth with all of its arabesques and gold printing and cameo-like image but we have to remember that the whole Japonisme thing and etc was a hot mess of orientalist bullshit and the impressionists and art nouveau people who lifted some of those styles were like, basically like the talented-but-terrible anime dweebs from high school BUT I DIGRESS. (that's not actually good art history don't cite it.) Craig Thompson is creepy and sexist and ableist and pretty racist and thinks everyone except for him is a noble savage and I will stand by that until my death or his. This is all important because 1. The Margins and Reading the Object (and the ways that the object becomes an important art object happens in comics) are very important to Benjamin's idea of the aura, and there's no way A. Degen wasn't aware of that. 2. the Klee angel was made through that weird-cool mono print method that is Very Different from the kind of print making that your bike collective/arts justice dweebs are into, and like Walter Benjamin had a weird relationship to mass production and so do comics especially minicomics. But you can buy a copy of Junior Detective Files yourself! I suggest you do! It will be just like my copy in every particular, but you will own it! It has nice drawings.

Also the thing in that essay in that book about how a book with lavish enough essays could have the original text illustrate/support the claims in the essays? Sure, I guess? Never say never. But what would such a book even be? It would pretty much cease to be the periphery or the margin at that point, and by custom, become content, right? Otherwise it would still be about the book's main content, because the tradition of reading habits is nothing to sneeze at. Also because all of the things like the location of the title, the relative lack of decoration or the general choice to do one image instead of an actual page of comics, all deliberately say "this IS the periphery."

Saying "we can study the relationship between the inside and the outside" or "we can ask useful questions in the margins" doesn't mean the same thing as "the margins aren't the margins!" As I also wrote to death in my div, sometimes the margins aren't the margins, but that is established with visual clues. All of the things that the essay was like "well they just happen" are book design, just because the person who does them is not an Artist doesn't make them not deliberate.

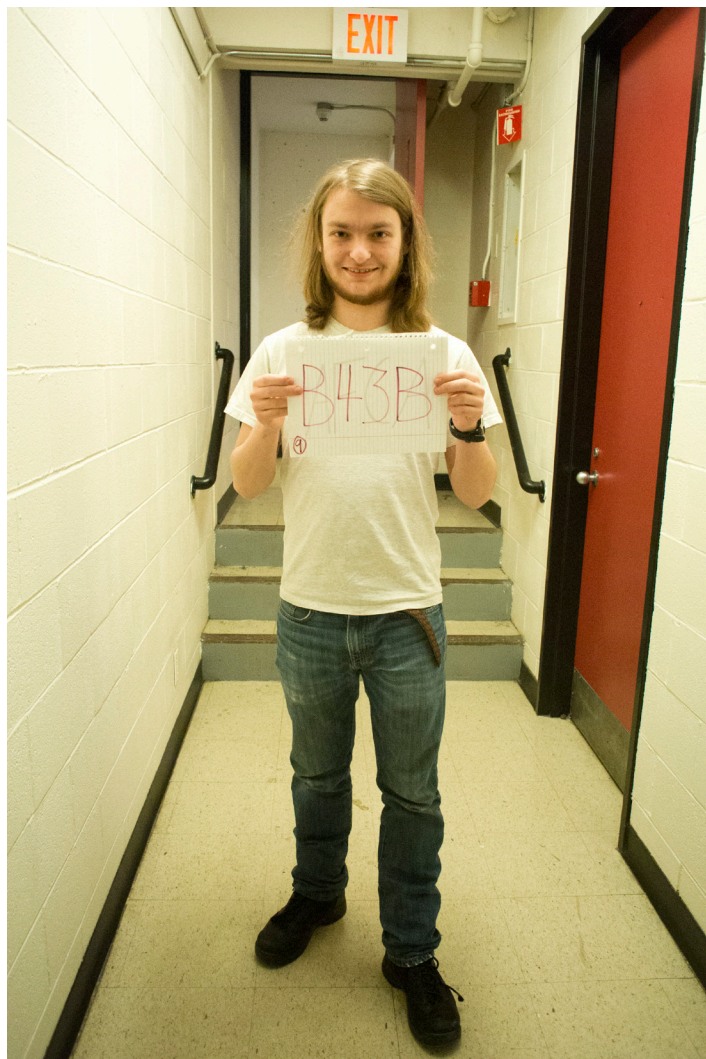


^Submitted by Jonathan Gardner!



Alex de Strulle vvv





Apparently this is really important and that it only makes sense if you read the pictures in order based on the numbers in the corner???? and you can reply through some system???? whoever it is this message is for I hope you get it for whatever secret cyberwar adam is involved in. I'm for whichever side likes pizza more. -shadow ed

China's TV Spectacular Was Spectacularly Misogynistic

Sexual harassment, spinsters, and body shame -- all things China's most-watched show found hilarious.

BY YIQIN FU

FEBRUARY 20, 2015



The world's most-watched television show may be trying to broaden its appeal, but angering the female portion of its 690 million [viewers](#) probably isn't what the directors had in mind. The Chinese New Year Gala, an annual variety show that this year aired on Feb. 18, featured four and a half hours of singing, dancing, and comedy acts. While not generally known for its quality or sophistication, the Gala has become a national tradition as families gather to celebrate the Lunar New Year, China's biggest holiday. But amid increasing awareness of women's issues in the country, this year's production ignited online debate over what many saw as discriminatory and insensitive skits about "secondhand" and "leftover women," as well as hints that female officials can get promoted by providing sexual favors.

Faced with a decline in ratings in recent years, Gala directors have sought to woo new viewers by incorporating youth-driven slang and topics, but their effort to do so this year went over like a lead balloon. Exhibit A: In one skit, a father was waiting to meet his daughter's boyfriend for the first time, but also, it happened, was trying to pawn off an old coat at a thrift store. (A daughter who is good to her parents is known in one Chinese expression as a "thoughtful cotton coat.") In a mix-up, the father mistook the thrift store employee for his future son-in-law. The employee proposed a price of around \$5, declaring his offer fair because the object of discussion was "used" and "secondhand." Later, when the father met the boyfriend, who the father thought was the thrift store employee, he said he intended to "donate" the coat (or was that his daughter?) to college students. Both jokes drew loud cheers and applause from the live in-studio audience. But web users were irate. In a widely shared Feb. 19 post on China's massive

microblogging platform, Weibo, one user wrote that the skit reinforced the notion that "women are the property of men," sold by the father to the husband. Then there's the topic of sheng nu, or so-called "leftover women" who've missed the window for matrimony. Women in China face tremendous pressure to wed before age 27; but as Chinese women become more educated, they have tended to marry later, and sometimes not at all. The topic of marriage is especially sensitive during the New Year, when daughters visit their parents back home and often have to defend their love life (or lack thereof). That provided grist for another Gala skit, in which a woman in her late 20s complained to her brothers about not having a job or a boyfriend. The brothers called upon a model to help their beleaguered sister; the model and the daughter then did a dance called "the 'manly lady' and the 'goddess,'" referring to Internet slang terms that describe an unladylike woman and a pretty woman, respectively. The model ("the goddess") chanted, "I have big eyes, small lips, and a tall nose. I have thin arms and thin legs." The "manly lady" responded with self-deprecating jokes about her own body and her lack of male suitors. To single women between the ages of 25 or 35, it felt an awful lot like they were the butt of the joke.

And then there's corruption: long taboo, but given official blessing this year as a Gala topic amid a nation-wide anti-corruption campaign. In a particularly egregious skit, a female official instructed a subordinate in how to ingratiate herself to the new male boss. "Let me show you how I climbed my way up," the woman said, pointing to a chart on her laptop detailing all her previous bosses' penchants. "This boss liked fishing, so I dived into the water and put the bait on the fishhook. This boss liked to play mahjong, so I sacrificed my good tiles to let him win. This one liked me." She paused and added, "Now you know how I got my position." The insinuation was clear – that the woman had risen through the ranks by sleeping with her boss. Many believed that the skits stigmatized single women in their late 20s and reinforced a stereotype that female government and corporate leaders in China are more likely to climb the career ladder through sex. "The Gala shamelessly discriminated against and made fun of women," one user wrote on Weibo. "Are the directors taking us back to imperial times when women had to bind their feet?"

Some defended the skits in language that feminists the world over might recognize. Netizens accused "overzealous feminists" of being too sensitive, too serious, or incapable of taking a joke. Others seemed perplexed at the online backlash. "Didn't we all laugh when we were watching?" a Weibo user wrote of one skit. "The show's creator didn't mean to [offend women], but some chose to interpret the jokes as discriminatory."

To be sure, the Gala has historically been something of an equal-opportunity offender. Past skits have repeatedly mocked people for their height, weight, looks, and regional accents. But in the past few years, numerous public debates both online and offline have questioned the place of women in Chinese society. Online outrage over this year's gala partly reflects increasing public awareness of gender inequality in China. In November 2013, students at Beijing Foreign Studies University were forced to defend themselves when, to promote a campus performance of *The Vagina Monologues*, they posted photos of themselves

The Omen · Volume 44, Issue 3

holding up messages such as, "My Vagina Says: I Want Freedom." NGOs such as Women's Media Monitor Watch have gained a sizable following online, recently engaging issues like gender discrimination in college admissions in an October 2014 report.

Interest in women's issues is increasing, but China has a long way to go to achieve gender parity. According to the World Economic Forum's 2014 Gender Gap Report, China ranks 87th worldwide in terms of gender equality, with a particularly poor performance on the Health and Survival Index due to its lopsided sex ratio. (Chinese officials have attributed the imbalance to "traditional preference for sons, the practice of arranging for sons to take care of elderly parents, and illegal sex-selective abortions.") For advocates of gender equality, the online debate about the Gala's gender stereotypes was at least a hopeful sign. "The fact that there is awareness and debate of this issue means that we are making progress," one Weibo user wrote. Others urged for the discussion to translate into action. "[Gender inequality] is an enduring, entrenched problem society faces," another wrote. "I hope the online debate doesn't end here."

-Submitted by Siqi Lu

Anger after China's Lunar New Year Gala mocks 'manly' women

By [Wilfred Chan](#), CNN

Updated 8:34 AM ET, Wed February 25, 2015



China's Lunar New Year Gala, watched by 690 million people, included a comedy skit mocking overweight, unmarried "manly women" by comparing them to "female goddesses."

Hong Kong (CNN) It was the most-watched TV show in the world -- and it was a sexist mess.

That's what Chinese activists are saying in a petition issued this week that calls for the cancellation of China's annual Lunar New Year Gala, [a state TV extravaganza](#) viewed last Wednesday by 690 million people -- but filled with grating skits mocking women and other minority groups.

One [sketch](#) depicted an overweight woman in her late-20s complaining about being unmarried. The punchline? Her brothers bring out a tall, slim female "goddess" to help their less attractive sister understand why she's still single.

"I've got big eyes, small mouth, a high nose, long legs... I'm pretty and a bunch of guys are chasing me that give me 'face'," chants the taller woman.

Then, in unison, the duo cheerfully exclaim their respective identities:

"Female goddess and manly woman!"

In another act, a father jokes about selling his daughter for 30 yuan (\$4.80).

Another skit mocks a "female cadre," implying that she's used sexual favors to advance her career.

Other parts of the show rag on southern Chinese people as well as dwarfs.

'The Lunar New Year Gala is poisonous'

In a society where women still face significant challenges -- from discrimination against girls to extreme pressure on women to marry early -- many watchers found the performance nauseating.

A widely-circulated petition called the show "poisonous" and demanded it to be taken off air.

"In the name of 'harmony' it erases the rights of people to live differently. It complacently slanders not just women... but all people, as long as you are eager to think critically and make decisions out of your free will," it said.

The petition racked up thousands of signatures, many of them by self-described feminists, before it was removed from the Internet. (CNN was able to access a cached version.)

But some posts by feminists remained uncensored on Weibo, China's public social media platform.

"Comparing 'manly women' and 'goddesses,' unmarried and unemployed women... what qualifications do you have to discuss these topics?" one highly-rated comment fumed at the show's producers.

"Why don't you discuss male losers? The fact that these skits were shown on the Gala is truly a national humiliation."

The same writer added: "We're not proposing that women rule over everything. We just want awareness of how women are discriminated against everywhere, and we want change."

CNN's Serena Dong contributed reporting.

-Submitted by Siqi Lu



^Submitted by Rowan Lupton v



